



**Connect | Recruit | Develop | Retain**

# **Dubuque Works Strategic Plan 2017–2022**

## **YEAR 1 UPDATE**

**Greater Dubuque Development Corporation**

**City of Dubuque**

**Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque**

**Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce**

**Dubuque Area Labor Management Council**

**Dubuque Community School District**

**East Central Intergovernmental Association**

**Fountain of Youth**

**Holy Family Catholic Schools**

**Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

**IowaWorks of Northeast Iowa**

**Multicultural Family Center**

**Northeast Iowa Community College**

**Telegraph Herald**

**Travel Dubuque**

**United Way Services, Inc.**

**Western Dubuque Community School District**

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# INTRODUCTION

The Greater Dubuque region has taken workforce solutions to the next level with Dubuque Works, a collaborative regional partnership of employers, funding partners, workforce experts, and educators.

Dubuque Works focuses on three goals:

- **HUMAN CAPITAL:** Partners identify and address recruitment, retention, and relocation needs as defined by Greater Dubuque employers;
- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:** Partners build workforce capacity by enhancing training to meet employer demand;
- **COLLABORATION & EVALUATION:** Partners combine collaborative workforce efforts with quality research to generate evidence-based practices that improve performance and outcomes for local employers.

Dubuque Works is of vital importance to existing companies looking to expand, as well as prospective businesses considering a Dubuque location. Through Dubuque Works, the region is taking a proactive approach to ensure a steady pipeline of talent. Working together at the regional level, we can maximize recruitment and skill development of workforce success, regardless of national fluctuations in available talent.

## CONNECT, RECRUIT, DEVELOP, RETAIN

Our solutions to workforce challenges include a disciplined approach that uses community demographic data as well as data gathered from in-depth HR Action and InfoAction interviews with companies to develop custom solutions for the Greater Dubuque area. These include strategies to:

- **Connect** students, underemployed workers, and underrepresented populations to career exploration, education and training opportunities that will position them to pursue and attain high-demand jobs in our market.
- **Recruit** talent both locally and from across the country, including on our very own regional college campuses, through cutting-edge tools and regional promotion.
- **Develop** the technical, academic, and soft skills needed of our workforce now and into the future through collaborations with institutions of higher education, non-profits, and other federal, state, and local resources.
- **Retain** skilled workforce and top talent in the Greater Dubuque area through integrated partnerships with the business, non-profit, housing, workforce, health, recreation, and arts and culture communities.

**The following pages outline the strategies and outcomes for efforts over the past year. Items highlighted in green are programs funded by Dubuque Works.**

# 2017–2022 DUBUQUE WORKS STRATEGIC PLAN

## 1. Sustain or increase state and local funding of these critical workforce programs:

- |                                    |  |                               |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| a. Dubuque Works                   | e. Iowa Workforce Training & Economic Development Fund | g. Promise Jobs               |
| b. Iowa PACE                       | f. Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act                | h. Home Base Iowa             |
| c. Iowa Adult Literacy & Education |  | i. Registered Apprenticeships |
| d. Iowa GAP tuition assistance     |  | j. <i>Future Ready Iowa</i>   |

**STRATEGY:** Engage local partners to support strategic investments and advocate collaboratively at state and local levels.

### OUTCOMES:

- Community College Job Training program funding (GAP, PACE, Workforce Training and Economic Development) was sustained for FY19.
- Adult Literacy and Education funding was sustained for FY19.
- Promise Jobs funding was sustained for FY19.
- Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs were all reduced in FY19.
- Home Base Iowa staffing was sustained in FY19 and additional private funds have been raised for the program.
- Apprenticeship funding was increased \$1 million to expand registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.
  - Dubuque Community School District was awarded two grants to start pre-apprenticeship programs at Senior and Hempstead High Schools.
- Additional apprenticeship funding of \$1 million was secured as part of the *Future Ready Iowa* legislation for grants to apprenticeship sponsors for establishing programs in high-demand occupations.

**STRATEGY:** Ensure robust local implementation and communication of these programs to ensure strong outcomes, including sharing of personal success stories.

### OUTCOMES:

- Sharing information on IowaWorks Apprenticeship workshops and Opportunity Dubuque information sessions via *AccessDubuqueJobs.com* and social media.
- Dubuque Works programs represented in bi-monthly BizTimes articles written by Greater Dubuque Development.
- *AccessDubuqueJobs.com* LinkedIn page established and updated by Greater Dubuque Development.

**STRATEGY:** Work with employers and state and local programs to understand and decrease adverse effects experienced by program participants due to misalignment of state and federal benefits with wage increases, i.e. “cliff effect”.

### OUTCOMES:

- United Way of Iowa identified “cliff effect” reform as a legislative priority.
- Gaining Opportunities’ (formerly Circles USA) participants and program allies wrote letters to local and state officials highlighting the negative impact of the “cliff effect” on their lives.

## 2. Increase retention of local college graduates and recruitment of regional college graduates with in-demand skills through strategic partnerships among educational institutional and employers, including robust internship and graduate placement models.

**STRATEGY:** Increase relationships between regional employers and local college faculty, staff and students, utilizing the Employer College Connections manual, a how-to guide for employers.

### OUTCOMES:

- Greater Dubuque Development updated the Employer College Connection guide to provide a model for college student engagement and internship programs.
- In partnership with a local Information Technology (IT) employer, the IT Sector Partnership hosted a meet and greet of approximately 75 IT faculty and employers to network and connect on engagement opportunities for students and graduates locally.
- Greater Dubuque Development hosted a College Career Professionals Visit for 28 individuals from 21 regional colleges and universities to network with 25 employers and learn about the community to better advise students post-graduation and for internships in the Greater Dubuque Area.

**STRATEGY:** Develop Dubuque-area recruitment tool for employers and partners to utilize at college events engaging millennials to consider making the Dubuque area their home after graduation.

### OUTCOMES:

- Greater Dubuque Development published its *You can make it in Greater Dubuque* promotional brochure to highlight quality of life aspects of the community.
  - Distributed at college recruitment events through Greater Dubuque Development, employers, and other partners.
  - Provided to 132 college interns through presentations by Greater Dubuque Development staff.

**STRATEGY:** Increase utilization of *AccessDubuqueJobs.com* by both employers and students as a go-to resource to find internships and employment opportunities in the Greater Dubuque area.

### OUTCOMES:

- From July 2016 to June 2018, increased employer investors 19% to 182 from 153.
- Reached a peak of internship postings in January 2018 at 42, 15 more than January 2017.
- Expanded digital promotion on Facebook and through Google AdWords including to regional metros.
- Piloted and implemented text message feature in to alert users of new jobs posted in their categories of interest.
- Increased career events and open houses posted on *AccessDubuqueJobs.com* and promoted weekly through Facebook.
- Signed *AccessDubuqueJobs.com* up as a user on college recruitment platforms, such as *Handshake*, for easy student access to area job opportunities and events.

**STRATEGY:** Increase participation of local college students in Leaders Luncheon, networking events, Future Young Professionals, utilizing new mentoring program, and other programs that encourage college students engagement within the community.

### OUTCOMES:

#### Greater Dubuque Development hosted or attended the following events:

- Approximately 550 local colleges students attended six leaders luncheon events at local institutions of higher education.
- Greater Dubuque Development represented local employers through *AccessDubuqueJobs.com* at career fairs at University of Wisconsin–Platteville and University of Northern Iowa and at the Dubuque Networking and Etiquette event.
- Greater Dubuque Development represented local employers through *AccessDubuqueJobs.com* at two Telegraph Herald Job Fairs.
- Greater Dubuque Development participated in Clarke University and University of Dubuque mock interview programs.

The Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce hosted the following events or programs:

- Young Professionals (YP) network grew to 2000 members.
- YP Board added an Academic Outreach Director to develop a *Next Up* program to compliment the Chamber's YP program by connecting college students to YP through mentors. To date, the University of Dubuque has 30 *Next Up* members.

### 3. Increase access to local public transportation for college students and 2nd and 3rd shift workers in the City of Dubuque and Peosta.

**STRATEGY:** Sustain campus and partner-funded access to the Jule transportation system for college students, increasing their access to employment and community amenities.

**OUTCOME:**

- The College Transit Partnership provides actively enrolled students at the participating colleges unlimited access to all of the Jule's routes and services for an annual fee of \$20 per student at University of Dubuque, Clarke University, and Loras College. This level of access is valued at \$500 per student annually.
  - 1,364 college students rode the Jule in FY18, representing 19-47% of the student body at each institution.

**STRATEGY:** Increase college population utilizing the Jule through campus and community awareness.

**OUTCOME:**

- Clarke University students reached an all-time-high ridership of 326 unique students completing 5,754 rides.

**STRATEGY:** Sustain increased evening hours of the Jule implemented in 2017 and work with public-private partnerships to expand Jule service to serve more employees on 2nd and 3rd shifts.

**OUTCOME:**

- Evening service (6:00-9:00 p.m.) was implemented in FY18, resulting in 21,404 additional rides over the previous year.

**STRATEGY:** Explore public-private partnership models and employer incentive models to provide transportation from Dubuque to Peosta Industrial park and Northeast Iowa Community College campus in Peosta.

**OUTCOME:**

- Greater Dubuque Development surveyed Peosta businesses, staffing agencies and Northeast Iowa Community College regarding willingness to fund transportation, shift times, and sizes.
- Regional Transit Authority (RTA) implemented a Dubuque to Peosta pilot with five routes from JFK Transfer to Kapp Dr. between 5:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Dubuque Works promoted this pilot program via social media, newsletter, and information to the employers surveyed.

#### 4. Support pathways to employment for individuals with significant barriers to employment such as ex-offenders, individuals with disabilities, individuals with mental health barriers, individuals with substance abuse barriers, unemployed and underemployed individuals, English Speakers of Other Languages, etc., which include access to 1:1 coaching and wrap-around services (child care, transportation, work related cost assistance).

**STRATEGY:** Close the gap between minority unemployment and overall unemployment in the Greater Dubuque area through identification of barriers to target populations and connections to existing or newly developed solutions.

##### **OUTCOMES:**

- The State Workforce Development Board created the Minority Unemployment and Outreach Committee to address disparities in the minority unemployment rate in Iowa. The goal of the subcommittee is clear and measurable: to reduce unemployment in minority communities by five percent (or to the state average) in five years. Dubuque Works has representation on the state committee and hosted a listening session to identify barriers.
- Greater Dubuque Development promoted career fairs at the Multicultural Family Center through the Finders of Keepers newsletter and to Manufacturing Alliance and other sector partnership groups. Career Fairs were held by Sedona Staffing, John Deere (2), Sedgwick, Anderson Window, and Area Residential Care.
- Greater Dubuque Development presented workforce data and educational pathway opportunities through Opportunity Dubuque at the Black Men Coalition Manhood Project for high school students.
- Dubuque Works continued partial funding of Northeast Iowa Community College Outreach Success Coach to ensuring equity in recruitment of minority students into Opportunity Dubuque.
  - In FY18, the Outreach Success Coach recruited 49 minority students into Opportunity Dubuque out of 87 total recruited.

**STRATEGY:** Increase recruitment, completion and employment of Opportunity Dubuque graduates through strategic outreach, multiple offerings and delivery models, development of new, in-demand certificates, increased engagement with employers, and implementation of work experience component for individuals with multiple barriers.

##### **OUTCOMES:**

- New certificate programs in Solar and Automotive Technology implemented.
- 74 students enrolled in FY 18.
  - 53 students completed a program in FY 18.
  - 94% of FY 18 graduates who could be reached were employed or continuing their education.

**STRATEGY:** Fully implement and enhance Second Chance Hiring pathway for individuals with prior criminal backgrounds who have difficulty obtaining employment, including partnership with Fountain of Youth's *Real Talk on Elm Street* and mentoring programs, IowaWorks' Providing Opportunities for Ex-Offenders to Succeed (POETS) program, and other relevant programs.

##### **OUTCOME:**

- Employer meetings held regarding federal bonding and Work Opportunity Tax Credit programs.
- 12 students enrolled in second chance program; 7 completed training and are being assisted with employment.
- The Fountain of Youth served 80 adults through the *Real Talk* program. (*Real Talk* is focused on adults 18 and older, some of whom are currently incarcerated. The curriculum for this program includes *Getting Ahead while Getting Out* and consists of a 14-week program with an emphasis on examining where participants are now and helping to move them into contributing roles within the community becoming financially and personally responsible citizens.) 100% of program graduates are employed.

- The Fountain of Youth served 40 young adults in the PIONEERS program. (The PIONEERS program for young adults includes *Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' by World* and uses a holistic approach to help participants with financial literacy, interpersonal skills, building resources, and promoting stability.)

**STRATEGY:** Develop stronger employer partnerships with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to increase employment of individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment, including increasing utilization of Ticket to Work program.

**OUTCOMES:**

- Greater Dubuque Development presented Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services programs at the Spring Workforce Breakfast to encourage employers to build relationships to assist in employment of roughly 700 individuals on Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation caseloads in Dubuque, Clayton, and Delaware counties.
- Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services successfully placed 165 job candidates into community employment in FY18.
- In partnership with IowaWorks, IVRS hosted a reverse career fair for job seekers to display and present their talents and workforce abilities to employers.

**STRATEGY:** Build relationships among workforce partners and mental health providers, including substance abuse services, to enhance cross-referrals and improve pathways to employment for individuals from the mental health system and to increase employer ability to access to mental health services for their employees.

**OUTCOMES:**

- Reconvened Mental Health Stakeholder group with representation from services providers, United Way, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, and City of Dubuque to expand work of initial mental health needs assessment.
- A group convened to support mental health in the Greater Dubuque area as it relates to the Department of Corrections. The goal of this group is to improve knowledge and understanding of the needs of the population and to work together to improve supports and services needed.
- United Way continues to work with 11 funded partners to track agreed upon, client-level outcomes for mental health services in our service area.

**STRATEGY:** Enhance workforce and employment services and improve outreach to English Speakers of Other Languages to increase engagement with this community in workforce opportunities.

**STRATEGY:** Increase participation in existing programs serving the target and utilization of existing resources in the community through targeted outreach and intentional partnerships with service providers.

**OUTCOMES:**

- The Gaining Opportunities program (formerly known as Circles USA) reported that 21 out of 28 participants completed the *Getting Ahead in the Workplace* curriculum.
- The Gaining Opportunities program led two Workplace Stability events were held in the community for area employers, focusing on how employers can enhance their internal communication across socioeconomic employee groups to reduce employee turnover, increase performance and increase profitability. More than 100 people attended the two trainings.

## 5. Increase student exposure to high-demand and high-wage occupations through support of preK-12 workforce readiness programming, including the following:

- |   |                                 |                                     |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. Concurrent enrollment                          | d. Tech WORKS                   | h. <i>Future Ready Iowa</i> website |
| b. Career Learning Link                           | e. <i>Business After School</i> | i. Junior Achievement               |
| c. Iowa Career and Technical Education Task Force | f. iJag                         | j. Mentorship programs              |
|   | g. HEART program                |                                     |

**STRATEGY:** Increase communication of local labor market information to educators, counselors, parents and students, including job outlook and wage information, through the Future Ready Iowa portal.

### OUTCOMES:

- Northeast Iowa Community College and a local Human Resources panel led a session in spring 2018 for Dubuque school district counselors to promote alternative pathways to employment (i.e. tuition reimbursement, certificate training options, etc.).
- Dubuque Community School District established a college and career readiness subcommittee to implement action plan for new school board goal of increasing the number of students having a college/career experience to 100% by 2023.

**STRATEGY:** Sustain Career Learning Link model, which introduces high school students to high-demand career pathways, including work-related experiences and coursework.

### OUTCOMES:

- Dubuque Community School District enrolled 199 students and Western Dubuque School District enrolled 100 in the Career Learning Link program:
  - 99 students have participated in workplace tours, and 110 in job shadows;
  - Career Coaches in the program have conducted 586 career & academic coaching sessions;
  - Students have completed 105 Certified Nursing Assistant certificates, four construction certificates, and nine Emergency Medical Technician certificates.

**STRATEGY:** Support implementation of Dubuque's Local College Access Network (LCAN) grant.

### OUTCOMES:

- Dubuque Works was represented on panel to key stakeholders in January 2018.
- Dubuque works has committed \$1200 matching funds to LCAN grant administered by the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque.

**STRATEGY:** Engage employers to participate in preK-12 workforce development and exposure opportunities through sector boards participation and direct outreach, including increased opportunities for K-12 instructors to participate in externships or partner with the private sector.

### OUTCOMES:

- Information Technology Sector Partnership employers provided input to Dubuque Community School District's evaluation of its Information Technology track for students, including new course development.
- Area sheet metal workers participated in classroom presentations through Dubuque Area Labor Management to 133 students.

**STRATEGY:** Implement college and career readiness course in grades 9-12 to expose students to career "soft skills."

### OUTCOMES:

- Hempstead and Senior High Schools both offer Concurrent Courses (college credit and high school credit earned in high school, taught by a teacher accredited to teach for the college):
  - CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGIES
  - PRE-EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

**STRATEGY:** Host career exploration events and industry tours for students in middle and high school to expose them to career opportunities in the tri-state area.

### OUTCOMES:

- 75 students participated in the *Business After School* program to tour Cartegraph, IIW, John Deere Dubuque Works, Unified Therapy Health Services, and Mercy Medical Center.

*Items highlighted in green are programs funded by Dubuque Works.*

- Piloted employer job fair component at the Hempstead High School career awareness fair. Six employers (Sedgwick, Portzen Construction, Conlon Construction, Dupaco Community Credit Union, Hormel and Stonehill Franciscan Services) participated.
- 40 students participated in Youth Education and Employment Program through the Multicultural Family Center in 2018 with 14 business partners. Students experienced workplace tours and presentations from professionals regarding college and career readiness.
- Dubuque Area Labor Management hosted career fairs at Senior and Hempstead High Schools. Attendance at Senior was 694 students and 22 companies, and attendance at Hempstead was 2,250 students and 43 companies.
- Dubuque Area Labor Management's 8th Grade Career Exploration Fairs hosted 1,300 students from Dubuque and East Dubuque at three events.
- Dubuque Area Labor Management hosted tours for students at Design Mill (8 students), Apprenticeship Training Center for Iron Workers and Carpenters (40 students), Apprenticeship Training Center for Electricians, Plumbers/Pipefitters (9 students) and Hormel (6 students)
- Dubuque Area Labor Management hosted a Construction Expo with 18 schools or programs participating and 259 students attending.
- Dubuque Area Labor Management hosted 32 students and their parents at "Become an Engineer Night".

**STRATEGY:** Increase participation in Tech WORKS for students interested in pursuing a career in the trades.

#### **OUTCOMES**

- 58 students currently enrolled in Tech WORKS (32 pre-engineering, 12 manufacturing, & 14 construction); the program had 26 graduates in 2017-2018.

### **6. Expand pathways for opportunity youth and adults to re-engage in employment and training by completing a high school diploma or a high school equivalency degree, and then continuing a pathway to further education and employment.**

**STRATEGY:** Develop a pathway for individuals without a high school diploma to achieve a High School Equivalent Degree (HSED) and Opportunity Dubuque training.

#### **OUTCOMES:**

- Re-engage Dubuque completed its 6th year of student outreach. The program staff engaged 157 students to complete a high school diploma or High School Equivalency Degree (HSED) in FY 18; 29 students earned a high school diploma and 11 completed the HSED.

**STRATEGY:** Sustain and enhance Re-engage Dubuque to improve program graduates' ability to continue directly into career training following completion of high school diploma or equivalency.

### **7. Support integrated partnerships with City and non-profit service providers in Housing, Education, Workforce, Health, and Arts and Culture to reduce duplication of services to low-income residents and enhance client success to achieve economic stability.**

**STRATEGY:** Ensure relationship among multiple service providers/coaches, including ability to share data and information, to improve client handoffs and services.

**STRATEGY:** Ensure Dubuque Works supported programs are well-known by service providers outside the workforce sector to increase collaboration, alignment of systems and processes, and cross-referrals.

#### **OUTCOMES:**

- Northeast Iowa Community College implemented Success Team monthly meetings to increase referrals of eligible candidates to Opportunity Dubuque. To date, the team:
  - Created a shared vision statement;
  - Signed memorandum of agreement;
  - Adopted a common referral form to share information regarding student/clients for partners to share information regarding student/clients to improve customer experience and increase referrals.

## 8. Support disaggregation of all program data, workforce data, and population data to identify inequities and bias, support equity education opportunities and utilize an equity lens to inform decisions.

*Items highlighted in green are programs funded by Dubuque Works.*

**STRATEGY:** Continue to disaggregate data and set targets to reduce disparities or gaps.

### **OUTCOMES:**

- Dubuque Works adopted the goals of the State of Iowa Minority Unemployment and Outreach Standing Committee to reduce minority unemployment rates by 5 percentage points or to the state average by 2022.
- Dubuque Works disaggregated American Community Survey and EMSI jobs survey data by race/ethnicity to identify disparities based on race/ethnicity related to education, employment, household make-up, and other factors.

**STRATEGY:** Share information and partner with Inclusive Dubuque network to enhance equity of Dubuque Works' programming.

### **OUTCOME:**

- Dubuque Works shared disaggregated workforce and program data with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque for the Community Data Walk hosted in March 2018 for community leaders to look at community data and explore key issues like academic achievement, childcare, economic opportunity, and equity and inclusion.

**STRATEGY:** Enhance HR Action survey to ask better questions of employers about equitable hiring practices.

### **OUTCOME:**

- In partnership with the City of Dubuque's Human Rights Department, Greater Dubuque Development enhanced the confidential survey tool to include several questions that provide information on employers' diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and outcomes, including collection and interaction with equity data.

## 9. Support community development and marketing strategy that attracts millennial and other workforce, including social media campaign and other joint marketing of the Greater Dubuque area.

**STRATEGY:** Utilize data from newcomer focus groups and millennial roundtables to identify regional strengths and challenges in attracting millennial and other workforce and to develop a shared marketing strategy for the Greater Dubuque area.

### **OUTCOME:**

- Greater Dubuque Development shared focus group results with City of Dubuque leadership, Dubuque Works partners, its local HR Advisory committee, and the public through the Spring Workforce Breakfast.

**STRATEGY:** Partner with Travel Dubuque (formerly Dubuque Visitors and Convention Bureau) to leverage existing market reach in implementation shared marketing strategy.

### **OUTCOME:**

- Travel Dubuque presented on 2018 recruitment strategy and success in attracting target demographic of millennial women and women with children to the Travel Dubuque website.
- Subcommittee began meeting on development of community marketing strategy in May 2018. Strategy will include outreach via social media, focus on quality of life amenities and include a plan to export the strategy to Dubuque Works partners and employers.